

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2641

INFO AMEMBASSY BERN PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 HELSINKI 1301

MOSCOW PASS AMB. LEONARD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, SI, FI, UR, PARM

SUBJECT: SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE HELD
IN HELSINKI

REF: (A) HELSINKI 1293 (NOTAL), (B) LONDON 6436 (NOTAL)
(C) MOSCOW 9057 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL (SI) CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT IN HELSINKI APRIL 24-26 PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTY DELEGATIONS FROM 21 COUNTRIES TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON DISARMAMENT ON THE EVE OF THE UN SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT (SSOD). THE UNPRECEDENTED PRESENCE OF AMERICAN AND SOVIET GUEST SPEAKERS (DEPUTY UN REPRESENTATIVE JAMES LEONARD AND CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARY AND POLITBUREAU CANDIDATE BORIS PONOMAREV), INVITED AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE HOST FINNISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (SDP) ATTRACTED AS MUCH, IF NOT MORE, ATTENTION THAN DID ATTENDANCE BY SUCH SI LUMINARIES AS CHAIRMAN WILLY BRANDT, SWEDEN'S OLOF PALME, AND BRITAIN'S DAVID OWEN. DISCUSSION OF DISARMAMENT ISSUES PRODUCED NO DECISIONS BUT THE GENERAL TONE OF REMARKS WAS FAVORABLE TO THE UNITED STATES AS VIRTUALLY ALL SPEAKERS REFERRED IN POSITIVE FAVORABLE TERMS TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S DECISION ON THE NEUTRON BOMB AND SUGGESTED THAT IT IS NOW CONFIDENTIAL

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UP TO THE SOVIET UNION TO RECIPROCATATE. AN INVITATION BY PONOMAREV TO SEND AN SI DELEGATION TO MOSCOW WAS TAKEN UNDER STUDY, BUT BRANDT MADE CLEAR THAT ANY CONSULTATIONS WOULD BE AT A TECHNICAL LEVEL ONLY. (NOTE: AMBASSADOR LEONARD SAW THIS MESSAGE ONLY IN ROUGH DRAFT.) END SUMMARY.

2. THE FINNISH SDP INITIATIVE OF INVITING GUEST SPEAKERS FROM THE TWO SUPERPOWERS, CLEARED IN ADVANCE WITH THE SI, CREATED UNEXPECTED PROBLEMS FOR THE SDP WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR SHORTLY BEFORE THE CONFERENCE THAT THE SOVIETS INTENDED TO SEND A HEFTY 20-MAN CPSU "DELEGATION" IN SUPPORT OF PONOMAREV. SI LEADERS BALKED AT HOLDING THE CONFERENCE WITH SUCH A MASSIVE CPSU PRESENCE. THE MATTER WAS RESOLVED ONLY WHEN THE FINNISH ORGANIZERS WORKED OUT AN ARRANGEMENT LIMITING THE SOVIETS TO FIVE SEATS AT PONOMAREV'S TABLE IN THE SECTION RESERVED FOR DELEGATES AND RESTRICTING THE REMAINING SOVIETS TO THE OBSERVER SECTION AT THE REAR OF THE CONFERENCE HALL. MOREOVER, THE SDP AND SI CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS URGED THE EMBASSY TO PROVIDE A SIMILAR NUMBER OF AMERICAN "ADVISORS" TO JOIN AMBASSADOR LEONARD AT THIS TABLE IN

THE SECTION RESERVED FOR DELEGATION. THUS, GUEST
SPEAKERS WERE FLANKED BY THEIR ADVISORS DURING THE
CONFERENCE; NEVERTHELESS, UNDER THE UNDERSTANDING
WORKED OUT, NEITHER THE GUEST SPEAKERS NOR THEIR ADVISORS
PARTICIPATED IN THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE
AFTER THE SPEECHES BY LEONARD AND PONAMAREV IN THE OPENING
SESSION. THE ARRANGEMENTS, NOWEVER, PERMITTED THE
EMBASSY TO FOLLOW THE ENTIRE CONFERENCE FROM THE FLOOR
WHERE THE LARGEST CONTINGENTS PROVED TO BE THOSE OF
FINLAND, THE SOVIET UNION, AND THE UNITED STATES. BRANDT
PERSONALLY EXPRESSED HIS GRATITUDE FOR OUR COOPERATION,
AS DID SDP REPRESENTATIVES ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS. ALL
DELEGATES WERE EXTREMELY FRIENDLY TO US AND MADE CLEAR
THAT THEY WELCOMED OUR PRESENCE AS A BALANCE TO THE
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EXCESSIVE SOVIET PRESENCE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 4 HELSINKI 1301

MOSCOW PASS AMB. LEONARD

3. THE OPENING SESSION SPEECHES BY AMBASSADOR LEONARD AND PONOMAREV HAD AN OBVIOUS INFLUENCE ON THE ORIENTATION OF DISCUSSIONS THROUGH THE ENTIRE CONFERENCE. SUBSEQUENT SPEAKERS FREQUENTLY REFERRED TO ONE OF AMBASSADOR LEONARD'S CENTRAL THEMES, THAT EUROPEANS SHOULD TAKE MORE INITIATIVE IN MATTERS OF DISARMAMENT. IN THIS CONNECTION, SEVERAL DELEGATES, NOTABLY THE GERMANS (PAVELCZKY), TOOK THE LINE THAT EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS CAN MAKE THEIR BEST CONTRIBUTION THROUGH THE MBFR TALKS, AS A COMPLEMENT TO THE GREAT POWER SALT DISCUSSIONS. BRANDT IN HIS CLOSING REMARKS, IN WHICH HE SAID THAT AMBASSADOR LEONARD'S MESSAGE DID NOT GO UNHEARD, REFERRED TO GERMAN INITIATIVES AT VIENNA WITH AN AIM TO BRING ABOUT A REDUCTION OF TROOPS ON BOTH SIDES ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLE OF COLLECTIVITY, APPARENTLY REFERRING TO SOVIET EFFORTS TO LIMIT INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY LEVELS, PARTICULARLY WEST GERMANY. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE NEED FOR EUROPEANS TO DO MORE IN DISARMAMENT, BRANDT AND OTHERS MADE CLEAR THEY BELIEVE THE SUPERPOWERS MUST TAKE THE LEAD IN DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS THROUGH SALT.

4. PONOMAREV, LIKE AMBASSADOR LEONARD, WAS UPBEAT ON PROSPECTS FOR A NEW SALT AGREEMENT, ALTHOUGH HE PRE-

DICTABLY CRITICIZED THE UNITED STATES AS A PACESETTER
IN THE ARMS RACE. IN REMARKS SEEN BY SOME DELEGATES AS
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REMARKABLE IN THE SI CONTEXT, HE ALSO WAS CRITICAL OF
CHINA, WHOSE "ACCELERATED MILITARIZATION IS PARTICULARLY
DANGEROUS IN VIEW OF ITS TERRITORIAL CLAIMS ON ITS
NEIGHBORS" (REF C). THE SOVIETS LATER FLOODED THE CON-
FERENCE WITH COPIES OF BREZHNEV'S APRIL 25 SPEECH TO THE
COMMUNIST YOUTH LEAGUE ON THE SUBJECT OF DISARMAMENT,
INCLUDING THE NEUTRON BOMB. THE EMBASSY, WITH SDP
APPROVAL, WAS ABLE TO RECIPROCATATE BY DISSEMINATING COPIES
OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S APRIL 25 NEWS CONFERENCE RESPONDING
TO THE BREZHNEV SPEECH.

5. THE "NEUTRON BOMB" AND PRESIDENT CARTER'S DECISION ON
IT WERE MENTIONED BY VIRTUALLY EVERY SPEAKER AT THE CON-
FERENCE. ALTHOUGH SOME DELEGATES FELT MOVED TO REITERATE
THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON (PALME,
VAN DER STOEL, FINNISH PRIME MINISTER SORSA) ALL WELCOMED
PRESIDENT CARTER'S DECISION AS A STEP IN THE RIGHT
DIRECTION AND ALL, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, APPEARED TO
AGREE WITH THE CONSENSUS THAT, IN DAVID OWEN'S WORDS,
QUOTE THE ONUS NOW IS ON THE SOVIET UNION TO SHOW A
COMMENSURATE RESTRAINT OVER THOSE ELEMENTS OF THEIR OWN
FORCES, BOTH NUCLEAR AND CONVENTIONAL, WHICH CAUSE
APPREHENSION IN THE MINDS OF OTHER COUNTRIES UNQUOTE.
PARTICULARLY FORTHRIGHT ON THIS ISSUE, IN ADDITION TO
OWEN, WERE FRANCE'S JEAN PIERRE COT, WHO GREETED THE
CARTER DECISION WITH SATISFACTION AND SAID HE EXPECTS
EQUIVALENT SIGNS FROM THE OTHER SIDE TO SET A GOOD
ATMOSPHERE FOR SSOD; AND VAN DER STOEL, WHO EXPRESSED
HOPE THAT THE QUOTE CONSIDERABLE AMERICAN RESTRAINT WILL
BE RECIPROCATED BY THE OTHER SIDE UNQUOTE. EVEN PALME
STATED SLATLY TO AMBASSADOR LEONARD PRIVATELY THAT HE
THOUGHT THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION QUOTE EXACTLY RIGHT
UNQUOTE.

6. MOREOVER, THERE WERE SEVERAL FAVORABLE REFERENCES BY
SPEAKERS DURING THE CONFERENCE TO THE CARTER COMMITMENT
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TO A STRONG NON-PROLIFERATION PROGRAM, TO HIS ACT OF
RESTRAINT IN CANCELLING THE B-1 BOMBER PROGRAM, AND TO
HIS SUPPORT OF EFFORTS TO FIND A LESS PROLIFERATIVE
NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE. IN SHORT, THE OVERALL MOOD OF THE

CONFERENCE ON THESE QUESTIONS WAS VERY FAIR TO THE

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FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 4 HELSINKI 1301

MOSCOW PASS AMB. LEONARD

UNITED STATES AND SEEMED CLEARLY TO CONSIDER IT IS NOW
THE SOVIET UNION'S TURN TO OFFER SOME RECIPROCAL ACTION.
NOR DID BREZHNEV'S APRIL 25 SPEECH AFFECT THIS GENERAL
VIEW OF CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS.

7. ON GENERAL DISARMAMENT MATTERS, THE DELEGATES PRO-
DUCED NO NEW PROPOSALS OF THEIR OWN. THERE WAS A CLEAR
INCLINATION NOT TO PREEMPT THE SSOD, AND MOST DELEGATES
IN FACT EXPRESSED A PREFERENCE TO WORK WITHIN ESTABLISHED
DISARMAMENT MACHINERY. SOME EXPRESSED THE NEED TO
REJUVENATE THE MACHINERY, HOWEVER, AND PARTICULARLY
FOREIGN MINISTER OWEN GENERATED MAJOR PRESS ATTENTION
WITH HIS CALL FOR CHANGING THE CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT (CCD) BY DROPPING THE CO-CHAIRMAN INSTI-
TUTION TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR FRANCE AND CHINA TO PAR-
TICIPATE AND BY BRINGING THE CCD INTO CLOSER ASSOCIATION
WITH THE UN. THE FRENCH SOCIALIST REPRESENTATIVE
SUPPORTED THE CREATION OF A NEW DISARMAMENT BODY. SOME
DELEGATES EXPRESSED TO US PRIVATELY THEIR BELIEF THAT
THE SI ITSELF HAD NO FUTURE AS A SEPARATE DISARMAMENT
FORUM. HOWEVER, BRANDT ANNOUNCED THE INTENTION TO
CREATE A DISARMAMENT STUDY GROUP FOLLOWING THE SI
BUREAU MEETING IN DAKAR IN MAY.

8. THE ONLY DELEGATE APPEAL NOT RELATED TO DISARMAMENT
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CAME FROM THE DOMINICAN REPRESENTATIVE, DE CAMPS, WHO
CALLED FOR INTERCESSION BY HIS SOCIALIST BROTHERS AND
BY THE SOVIET UNION TO ASSURE THAT FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS
IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ADHERE TO DEMOCRATIC STANDARDS.

9. PONOMAREV INTRODUCED A NOTE OF EXCITEMENT TO THE
CONFERENCE BY PROPOSING A SERIES OF CONTACTS BETWEEN
THE CPSU AND THE SI ON DISARMAMENT QUESTIONS, HIGH-
LIGHTED BY HIS INVITATION TO QUOTE A REPRESENTATIVE
DELEGATION OF THE SI AND ITS PRESIDENT, WILLY BRANDT
UNQUOTE TO COME TO MOSCOW TO DISCUSS QUOTE AT SUMMIT
LEVEL UNQUOTE THE PROBLEMS OF ENDING THE ARMS RACE.

BRANDT REPLIED TO THIS REMARKABLE (GIVEN THE HISTORY OF CPSU/SI RELATIONS) OFFER IN HIS CLOSING ADDRESS TO THE CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE PRESENCE AT THE CONFERENCE OF SOVIET AND AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVES AND SAID THAT THE NOT UNEXPECTED PARTICIPATION OF CPSU MEMBERS FROM THE SOVIET SIDE DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH QUOTE THE UNCHANGED PRINCIPLES AND EXPERIENCES OF THE SI THAT ONE HAS TO SPEAK WITH RESPONSIBLE POLITICIANS FROM MOSCOW IF ONE WANTS TO SPEAK ABOUT DISARMAMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION UNQUOTE. HE ADDED THAT QUOTE SOME OF US THINK THAT OUR GUESTS FROM THE SOVIET UNION, TOO, AT LEAST IN THIS CONNECTION MAY HAVE GIVEN UP SOME OF THEIR WELL-KNOWN IDEOLOGICAL POSITIONS VERSUS SOCIAL DEMOCRATS UNQUOTE. BRANDT SAID THAT THE PONOMAREV PROPOSAL WOULD BE REFERRED TO THE DISARMAMENT STUDY GROUP AFTER DAKAR BUT CAUTIONED THAT THE SI WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE FOR QUOTE ONE-SIDED ACTIVITY UNQUOTE. LATER IN TALKING TO THE PRESS BRANDT ADOPTED A HARDER LINE, SAYING THAT ONE SHOULD NOT MIX UP SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF ARMAMENTS WITH THE OLD THEME OF ALLIANCES BETWEEN PARTIES. HE WENT ON THAT ANY COOPERATION WITH THE CPSU BY THE SI ON DISARMAMENT WOULD BE ON A TECHNICAL LEVEL AND SAID HE HIMSELF WOULD NOT GO TO MOSCOW AS CHAIRMAN OF THE SI.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 4 OF 4 HELSINKI 1301

MOSCOW PASS AMB. LEONARD

10. COMMENT: THIS CONFERENCE WAS A MOST INTERESTING ONE IN AT LEAST 3 ASPECTS: THE DISARMAMENT DISCUSSION ITSELF, WHICH WAS MODERATE, BALANCED AND CONSTRUCTIVE; THE REMARKABLE AND UNPRECEDENTED CPSU INITIATIVE TOWARD THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL; AND THE ROLE AND PERFORMANCE OF THE FINNISH SDP, OCCUPYING THE USUAL AND ALWAYS DIFFICULT FINNISH POSITION OF ATTEMPTING TO BALANCE ITS TIES WITH THE WEST WITH ITS SECURITY POLICY IMPERATIVE OF MAINTAINING THE GOOD WILL OF THE EAST. IN THIS LATTER REGARD, FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE FINNISH SDP, THE CONFERENCE WAS A SUCCESS, ALTHOUGH NOT WITHOUT ITS UNCERTAIN MOMENTS. WHILE THE FINNISH SDP'S SISTER PARTIES EVIDENCED UNDERSTANDING OF THE SENSITIVITY OF THE SDP'S POSITION, THERE WAS CLEAR CONCERN AT TIMES

THAT THE SDP MIGHT ALLOW THE CPSU TO OVERWHELM THE CONFERENCE. THIS WAS AVOIDED, THANKS IN PART TO EXPRESSIONS OF JUST SUCH CONCERN FROM THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL. WE IN THE EMBASSY WERE SOMEWHAT DISTURBED BY THE EVIDENT SUSCEPTIBILITY OF THE SDP TO SOVIET PRESSURE WHICH NEARLY RESULTED IN EMBARRASSMENT FOR THE SI AND WHICH ALSO MANIFESTED ITSELF IN SOME ASPECTS OF SDP AND EMBASSY COOPERATION IN PREPARING THE PROGRAM OF AMBASSADOR LEONARD. FORTUNATELY, FINAL ARRANGEMENTS WERE SATISFACTORY TO THE SI AND TO THE EMBASSY INsofar AS THE PARTICIPATION OF AMBASSADOR LEONARD IS CONCERNED. WE
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EMERGED FROM THE CONFERENCE WITH FURTHER IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE SDP.

11. NEVERTHELESS, WE NOTED THAT THE FINNISH SDP POSITION ON DISARMAMENT EXPRESSED AT THE CONFERENCE, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO THE NEUTRON BOMB REMAINS SOMEWHAT ONESIDED. OF

ALL THE SPEAKERS PRIME MINISTER SORSA WAS LEAST CRITICAL OF THE SOVIET UNION AND LEAST FORTHCOMING CONCERNING PRESIDENT CARTER'S DECISION ON THE WEAPON. IN THIS REGARD WE NOTE THAT CONFERENCE RUMORS INDICATED SORSA IS A CANDIDATE FOR A LEADING ROLE - PERHAPS CHAIRMANSHIP - OF THE PLANNED SI DISARMAMENT STUDY GROUP. IN VIEW OF THE SPECIAL PRESSURES ON THE FINNISH SDP ON SUCH ISSUES, IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE IF THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SI WOULD FIND IT ADVISABLE TO SUPPORT SUCH A CHOICE.

RIDGWAY

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